

a base price column 62, a column to input an order quantity 63, a total price column 64, an estimated unit price column 65, a product identifier 66, a present date 67, a determine button 68, a retry button 69, a cancel button 70 and a sum  
 5 column 71. In this manner, the operation in Step A9 is carried out.

Next, the operation for placing an order by the buyer terminal 10 will be described. First, the intending purchaser makes access to the order-receiving center terminal  
 10 20 with the buyer terminal 10 via the Internet 40 (Step A10), upon which the order-receiving center terminal 20 shifts to an awaiting mode for accepting product orders, and the order accepting means 23 sends a product catalogue stored in the product catalogue memory 281 to the buyer terminal 10 (Steps  
 15 A11 and A12).

Upon receiving the product catalogue from the order-receiving center terminal 20, the product catalogue displaying means 11 of the buyer terminal 10 displays the product catalogue on the display unit 16. Once the intending  
 20 purchaser who has looked through this product catalogue selects a product of interest (e.g., Product A) on the product catalogue, the delivery-date-basis base price menu requesting means 13 sends a request for a delivery-date-basis base price menu to the order receiving center terminal 20  
 25 together with the product identifier of Product A (Step A13).

Upon receiving the product identifier of Product A, the order accepting means 23 of the order-receiving center terminal 20 uses this product identifier as a key to search

in the delivery-date-basis base price menu memory 284, thereby acquiring the delivery-date-basis base price menu for Product A. The acquired delivery-date-basis base price menu for Product A is then sent to the buyer terminal 10 (Step 5 A14).

The delivery-date-basis base price menu requesting means 13 of the buyer terminal 10 displays the delivery-date-basis base price menu for Product A as shown in Figure 7. The intending purchaser inputs quantity of intending purchase (10,000) in a quantity frame corresponding to a desired delivery date (June, 5th). Then, the estimation requesting means 14 sends a request for estimation to the order-receiving center terminal 20 together with the desired product quantity (10,000) and desired delivery date (June, 5th) (Step A15).

The price estimating means 24 of the order-receiving center terminal 20 estimates the selling price based on the desired product quantity and the desired delivery date contained in the estimation request, the so-far accepted total order quantity of Product A for the above delivery date (counting the desired order quantity), the standard selling price of Product A and the price scheme for Product A, and sends the estimated price to the buyer terminal 10 (Step A16).

The operation in Step A16 will be described in detail. First, the period from the present time point to the delivery date (June, 5th) is obtained. Referring to the period-based discount section of the price scheme, the discount rate (in this case,  $\beta$ ) corresponding to the period is obtained. Then,

the so-far accepted total order quantity of Product A for the above delivery date (June, 5th) is obtained counting the desired order quantity. The total order quantity including the desired order quantity is obtained, for example, as

- 5 follows. First, order information including the product identifier of Product A and the delivery date, June, 5th, is searched in the order information memory 285. Then, the order quantities contained in the searched order information and the desired order quantity (10,000) are summed, thereby
- 10 obtaining the total order quantity including the desired order quantity. Referring to the quantity-based discount section of the price scheme, a discount rate (in this case,  $\alpha$ ) corresponding to the total order quantity including the desired product quantity is obtained. Then, a price is
- 15 estimated according to the following equation (4).

Estimated price =

$$\begin{aligned} & (\text{Standard selling price of Product A}) \times (1 - \alpha/100) \\ & \times (1 - \beta/100) \end{aligned}$$

... (4)

- 20 In this manner, the operation in Step A16 is carried out.

- Upon receiving the estimated price from the order-receiving center terminal 20, the estimation requesting means 14 of the buyer terminal 10 displays the estimated price on
- 25 the estimated unit price column as shown in Figure 8, and calculates and displays the total price on the total price column (Step A17). The intending purchaser looks at the displayed estimated price. If the estimated price is